

**Communicable Disease Epidemiology  
and Immunization Section**

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**Health Advisory: Updated Zika Guidance Including Prevention of Sexual Transmission  
and Recommendations for Providers Caring for Pregnant Women – 29 July 2016**

**Actions requested:**

- Be aware that Zika virus can be sexually transmitted by a man or woman to his/her sex partners. Sexual exposure includes sex (vaginal, anal and oral sex, and the sharing of sex toys) without a barrier (i.e., male or female condoms, among other methods) to protect against infection.
- Take a travel history to Zika-affected areas for pregnant women *and their sex partners*.
- Advise pregnant patients with sex partners who live in or traveled to an area with Zika to use barrier methods during sex or abstain from sex for the remainder of their pregnancy.
- Be aware of recent updates to Zika testing guidance (see below and the links to CDC MMWR articles for more details)
- Report suspected Zika cases to Public Health at 206-296-4774.
- Take a travel history routinely to identify persons at risk for Zika virus and other travel-related infections.
- Today, Florida announced the first US cases of limited local Zika transmission in a specific area of Dade and Broward Counties. Mosquito precautions are recommended to all travelers to areas where Zika is active, especially pregnant women; there is no travel advisory at this time.

**Updated testing guidance (recent changes are underlined):**

**SYMPTOMATIC PATIENTS:** Test all symptomatic persons with a history of travel to an area of active Zika transmission OR unprotected sex with a person who lives in or has traveled to an area of active Zika transmission and who report ≥2 of the following symptoms (pregnant women do not need to have symptoms to qualify for testing) within 2 weeks of exposure: acute onset fever, maculopapular rash, arthralgia, or conjunctivitis. Testing of serum for dengue and chikungunya should be ordered from a commercial lab simultaneously.

- **If patient presents within 2 weeks of symptom onset:** Obtain serum and urine for Zika testing by **rRT-PCR** at a commercial lab. This extends the PCR testing window from <1 week to <2 weeks from symptom onset in symptomatic patients.
  - A positive Zika PCR result in either serum or urine indicates Zika virus infection. A negative Zika PCR result on serum or urine does not rule out infection. In those cases, a serum specimen should be reserved for testing by **antibody detection** methods. Positive/equivocal antibody results will be confirmed by PRNT.
- **If patient presents 2–12 weeks after symptom onset:** Obtain **serum for nonpregnant persons** or **serum AND urine for pregnant women**. This is a change from previous guidance which recommended collection of serum only if patients presented more than 2 weeks from symptom onset. Specimens should be submitted to Washington Public Health Lab after approval by Public Health – Seattle & King County for Zika testing.
  - Nonpregnant patients: Positive/equivocal Zika, dengue, or chikungunya antibody results will be confirmed by PRNT.
  - Pregnant patients: Positive/equivocal Zika antibody results will be confirmed by PCR testing of serum and urine.

- A positive Zika PCR result in either serum or urine indicates Zika virus infection. A negative Zika PCR result on serum or urine with a positive/equivocal Zika antibody result will be confirmed by PRNT.

**ASYMPTOMATIC PREGNANT PATIENTS:** Test asymptomatic pregnant women with possible exposure to Zika virus through travel to an area of active Zika virus transmission or through sexual exposure to a partner who lives in or has traveled to an area of Zika transmission during pregnancy.

- **If patient presents within 2 weeks of possible exposure:** Obtain serum and urine specimens for Zika testing by rRT-PCR at a commercial lab. This extends the PCR testing window from <1 week to <2 weeks from exposure in asymptomatic patients.
  - A positive Zika PCR result in either serum or urine indicates recent Zika virus infection. A negative Zika PCR result on serum or urine does not rule out infection. In those cases, a second serum specimen should be collected 2-12 weeks after possible exposure for Zika virus IgM testing. Positive/equivocal antibody results will be confirmed by PRNT.
- **If patient presents 2–12 weeks after possible exposure:** Submit serum and urine samples to Washington Public Health Lab after approval by Public Health – Seattle & King County for Zika and dengue testing.
  - Positive/equivocal Zika antibody results in pregnant patients will be confirmed by PCR testing of serum and urine.
    - A positive Zika PCR result in either serum or urine indicates Zika virus infection. A negative Zika PCR result on serum or urine with a positive/equivocal Zika antibody result will be confirmed by PRNT.
  - Positive/equivocal dengue antibody results will be confirmed by PRNT.

**ASYMPTOMATIC, EXPOSED MEN:** At this time, testing of exposed, asymptomatic men for the purpose of assessing risk for sexual transmission is not recommended.

#### **EXPOSED INFANTS:**

- If fetal ultrasounds detect microcephaly or intracranial calcifications or other abnormalities consistent with Zika infection, serum and urine from pregnant women who originally tested negative for Zika virus infection following travel should be retested for Zika virus infection. In these cases, also consider amniocentesis for Zika virus testing.
- Test infants born to women who had exposure to Zika virus transmission during pregnancy and have laboratory evidence of confirmed or possible maternal Zika infection OR have evidence of fetal infection. Infant serum should be collected in addition to cord blood, and fetal tissue specimens (placenta and umbilical cord) should also be submitted for pathology evaluation if available.

Call Public Health at 206-296-4774 for any questions about testing, specimen collection, or storage, and Public Health will also assist with interpretation of all Zika test results.

#### **RESOURCES**

- CDC MMWR: [Updated guidance for healthcare providers caring for pregnant women with possible Zika virus exposure](#)
- CDC MMWR: [Updated guidance for prevention of sexual transmission of Zika virus.](#)
- General Zika virus information and Zika testing forms: <http://www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/communicable/diseases/zika.aspx>
- Comprehensive CDC Zika resources: <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/>